



# NEWSLETTER

August 2004

## 48th Assembly District Empowerment Congress Hosts 2nd Annual National Night Out in Exposition Park

**O**n Tuesday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2004 South Los Angeles residents joined Assemblyman Mark Ridley-Thomas (D-Los Angeles) and the 48<sup>th</sup> Assembly District Empowerment Congress at the "2<sup>nd</sup> Annual National Night Out Event" in Exposition Park to foster neighborhood, grass roots participation and community policing programs. Councilwoman Jan Perry, Board of Equalization Member John Chiang, Reverend Norman Johnson, LAUSD Member Marguerite LaMotte, Reverend Leonard Jackson, LAPD Deputy Chief Earl Paysinger, LAPD Nancy Lauer and Peter Hong of the Korean American Federation joined South Los Angeles residents as a part of the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual National Neighbors Night Out.



*Children from South Los Angeles marched for safe streets and participated in other family friendly activities sponsored by the 48th Assembly District Empowerment Congress.*

"Let it be understood that our demands for safe streets and communities stand unabated," said the Assemblyman. "Our standard of respect for the law ap-

plies to law enforcers and lawbreakers. We want and need to be partners with law enforcement officers, but in order for that partnership to exist, the police must be held accountable when warranted."

The "21<sup>st</sup> Annual National Night Out" (NNO), a unique crime/drug prevention event sponsored by the National Association of Town Watch (NATW). The event featured food, entertainment, guest speakers and booths providing information about healthcare, violence prevention and arts and cultural affairs programs. Last year's National Night Out campaign involved citizens, law enforcement agencies, civic groups, business organizations and local officials from over 10,000 communities from all 50 states, U.S. Territories, Canadian cities and military bases worldwide. In all, over 34 million people participated in NNO 2003.

National Night Out is designed to:

- Heighten crime and drug prevention awareness;
- Generate support for, and participation in, local anticrime programs;
- Strengthen neighborhood empowerment and police-community partnerships; and
- Send a message to criminal letting them know that neighborhoods are organized and fighting back.



*Various religious, education and community leaders joined Assemblyman Ridley-Thomas, Deputy Police Chief Earl Paysinger, Sheriff Lee Baca and Captain Nancy Lauer at the National Night Out event to design to empower neighborhoods and build police-community partnerships.*

## Ridley-Thomas Convened Gun Violence Roundtable for Community Stakeholders to Discuss Policy Options to Curb Violence

On Friday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> Assemblyman Mark Ridley-Thomas convened the Gun Violence Prevention Roundtable to discuss the history of gun violence in California and introduce policy alternatives to reduce the incidence of gun violence. Those present at the roundtable included community advocates, stakeholders, and policy experts from across the state including Charles and Mary Leigh Bleck of the Million Mom March, Juliet Leftwich



*Assemblyman Ridley-Thomas engages in a policy discussion with anti-violence advocates on proposals to reduce the incidence of gun violence.*

of the Legal Community Against Gun Violence, Randi Rossi of the Department of Justice, Andres Soto of the Trauma Foundation and Billie Weiss of the UCLA School of Public Policy and the Violence Prevention

Coalition.

Assemblyman Ridley-Thomas opened the discussion with this statement. "It is my hope that during this roundtable discussion participants can engage in the meaningful dialogue necessary to produce substantive change." Following the Assemblyman's remarks, the issue was open to the table. Participants shared facts and figures of gun related deaths over the last two years and current strategies already in place to combat gun violence were also reviewed.

The two-hour roundtable ended with an introduction of three policy ideas to control gun violence and the use of assault weapons. The three are as follows: 1) reporting requirements for lost or stolen guns, 2) product liability insurance requirements, and 3) mandated ammunition ballistic fingerprinting.

## Opinion Leaders, Advocates and Health Plan Members Focused on the Uninsured and Low-income Families at Annual Summit

On July 31<sup>st</sup>, Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas addressed L.A. Care Health Plan members at a health summit focusing on access to health care for low-income families and the uninsured. Over 250 health plan members attended the annual L.A. Care event at the Radisson Hotel in downtown Los Angeles. The theme of the summit was "Health-care Options: Where Do You Fit In," and

featured speakers representing community clinics, the recently launched Children's Health Initiative of Greater Los Angeles, and the uninsured.

"More and more working families are losing their access to health care, either because their employer doesn't provide it or they can't afford it," said Assemblymember Ridley-Thomas. "It's vital that members of these communities become educated about what is and isn't available and what together, we can do to improve the plight of the uninsured."

Currently, Los Angeles is the epicenter of the uninsured crisis, with almost 2 million residents living without health coverage. Recently, L.A. Care Health Plan and over 40 other organizations announced the Children's Health Initiative of Greater Los Angeles, a public-private effort that

has raised over 80% of the \$112 million dollars needed to provide health coverage to Los Angeles County children through the age of 18.

"L.A. Care Health Plan and our partners are working towards finding solutions for affordable health coverage," said Howard Kahn, CEO of L.A. Care Health Plan. "Support from legislators like Assemblymember Ridley-Thomas only helps to further the cause."

L.A. Care is a local public agency and health plan serving residents of Los Angeles County through a variety of programs including Medi-Cal, Healthy Families and Healthy Kids. With over 750,000 members and a provider network of approximately 9,000, L.A. Care is one of the largest health plans in California and is the nation's largest public health plan.

## UMMA Community Clinic Rededication and Renaming

On Saturday, July 24<sup>th</sup>, Assemblyman Mark Ridley-Thomas attended the renaming ceremony and community fair for the University Medical Muslim Association (UMMA) Community Clinic. The clinic was previously called the UMMA Free Clinic and the name change confers upon the organization status as a *community clinic*, thereby making it eligible for additional funding sources.

UMMA was established initially as a student organization based at UCLA by



*From left to right: UMMA Board Members Dr. Charles Sadler, Aisha Siddiq and daughter, Norma Mtume, UMMA CEO Yasser Aman, Assemblyman Ridley-Thomas, Dr. Rumo Abdul-Cader, Mrs. Sadler, Dr. Mansur Khan, Dr. Khalid Siddiq and Dr. Altaf Kazi and daughter.*

medical and graduate students at UCLA and Charles Drew University in 1990. The clinic became operational in 1996 with the mission of promoting the well-being of the medically underserved by providing access to high quality healthcare for all regardless of the ability to pay.

Located in the heart of South Los Angeles, the clinic serves an impoverished but culturally rich population comprised of 51% Latinos and 43% African Americans. Ninety percent of the UMMA Community Clinic's patients are from a three-mile radius around the clinic. The clinic sees an average of 170 patients weekly and has a patient population of nearly 10,000 individuals.